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April 6, 2000

LB 914, 925

SENATOR CUDABACK: The Hilgert amendment is adopted. Mr. Clerk, next item.

CLERK: Senator Wickersham would offer AM3341. (Legislative Journal page 1642.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Wickersham, to open on your amendment, AM3341.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. This is a return to a concept that we discussed on General File. Senator Hilgert now has provisions in this bill that incorporate LB 914, a bill that he had introduced and that he thought was appropriate to address some child-care concerns. He actually wished to address the issue in a way that saved the state money and arguably provided a significant benefit to children and to their parents by providing a system whereby mothers could actually stay at home or fathers could stay at home with their child for a longer period than allowed under our current welfare laws, presumably benefiting the family as a unit. That's a provision in LB 925 that I can easily support and not just because it saves us money but because I think it makes a lot of sense in terms of the family unit. We have ample evidence that having parents be with their children, particularly at the early stages of their lives, is very important. What the amendment does is separate LB 914, as amended by Senator Hilgert today, from the "ADC" provisions--the aid to dependent corporations provisions. And, of course, it is the aid to dependent corporations that I find the most objectionable in this bill. And they've been brought to you together not as a sandwich, not even as a stir fry. They're just brought to you as two different pieces and you're asked to swallow them both at once, even if maybe you like one and don't like the other. Now here's a chance to separate them and to identify the one that you do like as opposed to the one you don't like and then maybe to make a choice after you've made that division. My choice for the division is that we should discard the aid to dependent corporations piece and advance the piece that is a real benefit to children and their families and is something that is easily supportable and fiscally responsible to do. So that's the amendment, Mr. President, and I would ask for its support.